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SUBJECT: USAU AMBASSADOR AND AU'S PEACE AND SECURITY

COMMISSIONER REVIEW CRISES IN AFRICA

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In their first meeting, USAU Ambassador Battle and AU Peace and Security Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra reviewed political crises on the African continent and each pledged to reinforce cooperation in the peace and security arena, including in the emerging counternarcotics effort. Lamamra believes Sudan's conflict must be resolved as it has an enormous stake across Africa. The AU and the U.S. must work together on Sudan and it is encouraging that SE Gration is firmly engaged and that our positions are coming together.

He said AU and U.S. positions on Somalia are similar, but he worries that Somalia could become another Afghanistan. On Guinea, Lamamra called for Dadis Camara to go and predicted the AU would impose sanctions on the coup perpetrators if constitutional order is not restored. Madagascar's stakeholders have yet to fully implement the Maputo agreement for power sharing, but a meeting of the chief rivals in Addis Ababa in early November could provide a way forward. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) USAU Ambassador Battle, accompanied by USAU A/DCM and AU Desk Officer, called on Lamamra at AU headquarters on October 16. The Ambassador assured Lamamra that the AU was "absolutely central to American policy" and was a critically important institution. Lamamra, a long-time Algerian diplomat and perhaps the most sought-after AU official on matters of peace and security, acknowledged that the United States support for AU missions was "invaluable" to the continental organization.

Counternarcotics

¶3. (SBU) The discussion immediately turned to the interests the USG and the AU share in combating narcotics trafficked from South Africa to Europe via West Africa. The Ambassador, having just returned from consultations with USAFRICOM leadership, suggested to Lamamra that the AU consider having an AFRICOM team visit to engage AU officials about the nature of the problem and to address possible assistance. Lamamra enthusiastically accepted the proposal, saying narcotics presented a national security threat on the continent. He cited governments in West Africa that were vulnerable to drug lords. Lamamra said islands off West Africa were known transit points for drugs originating from South Africa on their way to Europe. It was important to assess the nature of the threat and to examine how best to fight the drug traffic and prevent it from expanding. The Ambassador concurred, adding that it was critical to stop the phenomenon before it further imperils West African populations.

¶4. (SBU) Lamamra added that the AU will want to study how it can pool its resources on the continent in order to provide an effective response to the drug traffic. He said existing customs services, naval forces, and law enforcement agencies in West Africa were not up to the task as long as they worked alone.

Continuing conflicts

¶5. (SBU) Conflicts in various parts of Africa require further consultation with the United States, Lamamra said. The existing mechanism of International Contact Groups for Madagascar, Guinea, and Mauritania has proven effective in addressing the aftermath of unconstitutional changes of government, he assessed. The AU has appreciated that the international community has lined up behind the AU in order to speak with one voice against coup perpetrators. Lamamra said he believes that the U.S. and the AU are in agreement on how to tackle problems in the Great Lakes Region and in Somalia, and that our positions are becoming closer on how to address the situation in Sudan.

Sudan: Enormous stakes ahead

¶6. (SBU) The U.S. and the AU need to ensure that they succeed in developing a common vision of what Sudan will be in the future and what is a desirable outcome in Sudan, Lamamra said. He urged the U.S. and AU to "pool our efforts" and he

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praised SE Gration for his engagement on Sudan. Lamamra noted that the heads of state of the 15-member AU Peace and Security Council would convene in Abuja on October 29 to deliberate the findings and recommendations of the High-Level Panel on Darfur report. That report was presented to AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping by panel chairperson and former South African President Thabo Mbeki earlier in October. The AU has invited international partners to attend the session.

¶7. (SBU) Sudan remains one of Africa's most dangerous conflicts, Lamamra assessed. With elections in 2010 and 2011 in Sudan, the stakes for that country and for the continent as a whole are "enormous," he added, and the Sudanese conflict is certainly not one that the U.S. can solve alone. The Ambassador agreed with Lamamra, noting that the U.S. no longer has the desire to solve problems alone.

Somalia: Another Afghanistan?

¶8. (SBU) In Lamamra's view, Somalia is the continent's other most dangerous conflict. "It runs the risk of becoming another Afghanistan," he warned, citing the local, regional, and global ramifications of a conflict left unchecked. Lamamra said the AU had evidence of growing numbers of foreign fighters in Somalia.

Guinea: Time for Dadis to go

¶9. (SBU) Lamamra assessed that Captain Dadis Camara is a "big part of the problem" and "he needs to go" in order for Guinea to return to constitutional order and stability. He called for a neutral transition, meaning coup perpetrators should not be allowed to run in upcoming elections. Lamamra and the Ambassador agreed that narcotics trafficking and consumption, including by the illegal government in Conakry, were further devastating and corrupting the country. Lamamra previewed the October 17 ECOWAS summit that was expected to address the situation in Guinea. Lamamra made clear that the AU Peace and Security Council had given Dadis Camara a deadline to respect the return to constitutional order or face sanctions

from the AU.

¶10. (SBU) The September 28 killings at the stadium in Conakry aggravated circumstances. The AU supports the need for an immediate investigation into the September 28 events. Lamamra emphasized that there could not be any impunity after what happened. (Note: The AU PSC is expected to follow ECOWAS' lead in imposing sanctions on those responsible for the coup.) Lamamra also noted that Blaise Compaore would continue to play a facilitator role to find a way out of the crisis. The Ambassador expressed concern that the exit strategy not result in more violence.

Madagascar: Difficulties implementing Maputo agreement

¶11. (SBU) On efforts to find a solution in Madagascar, Lamamra explained that the four governing families there had yet to agree to fully implement the Maputo agreement for power-sharing. He noted that former President Ravalomanana had refused to accept Rajoelina as president of the transition government, and that there was disagreement over where to hold a meeting among the key stakeholders. One distinct possibility is for a meeting to take place in Addis Ababa in early November, Lamamra told the Ambassador. If that is the case and it is successful, it would launch the transitional period leading to elections in June 2010.

Climate change

¶12. (SBU) Lamamra and the Ambassador agreed about the importance of Africa speaking with one voice on the issue of climate change at the summit in Copenhagen in December. The U.S. is concerned that Africa will be devastated if the international community does not address the ecological impacts of climatic changes. Lamamra spoke of an urgent need

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to save the coming generations of Africans.
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